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Dear Colleagues in Ministry:

Remember: chaplains are men and women of peace.

Charles Dickens provided a classic description of the best and worst of times in his epic novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*. The recent attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., have radically altered our worldview and shattered the sense of national security we once enjoyed as a free and open society. The maiming and killing of our innocents surely qualifies as the worst of times for our society, yet as men and women of faith, we know there is still a best of times to come. While the terrorism of September 11, 2001, inflicted deep and painful wounds, it also galvanized us to do remarkable things. Our governmental leaders and agencies have discovered new paths of bipartisan cooperation. At local levels, crime has diminished and houses of worship now fill with many new faces as people seek the God who has always been there. As a Chaplain Corps, *you have united* to bring healing to the wounded, and comfort to those who have lost their loved ones. Now you prepare to minister to those who must travel in harm's way to confront a deadly enemy and establish a lasting peace. At this critical juncture in history we want to highlight a number of issues that strike us as particularly relevant as you minister to military units preparing to embark for war:

a. Keep in mind that we chaplains are, first and foremost, *noncombatants*. Our noncombatant status in combat requires that we do more than simply refrain from carrying or using weapons; it requires a noncombatant state-of-mind. You must never participate in *any* activity that compromises your noncombatant status, or that of other chaplains. That special and sacred status precludes activities like participating in the planning of military actions, carrying or conveying military intelligence, or transporting weapons or ammunition from one location to another. We can and should, however, offer moral/ethical advice across the *spectrum of activities*, whenever and wherever it is needed. For further clarification and guidance, go to the CRB website and hotlink the Geneva Conventions.

b. While the primary chain of command must always know and approve the locations and activities of its chaplains, combat scenarios often require chaplains to think beyond the needs of their own commands to provide ministry to military personnel *across command lines*. Supervisory chaplains must communicate these needs to Commanding Officers who "own" the religious ministry teams, and subordinate chaplains must cooperate with their seniors to fulfill the mission. Combat scenarios require that chaplains maintain a balance

between the requirements of their own unit and those of other units in their AOR. But always keep your commanders informed of your activities.

c. God has blessed us with the gift of communication. As Naval Officers and professional clergy, we understand the importance of communicating effectively with our chains of command and senior supervisory chaplains. Communication plays a pivotal role in combat. Many of us who have been deployed in harm's way have seen breakdowns in communication that may have resulted in injury or death. Adhering to the "C3 Model" of command, control, and communication will keep both our chain of command and our senior supervisory chaplains apprised of our whereabouts. In that way, we ensure our safety and the safety of our Religious Program Specialists.

d. Chaplains may play a critical role in dealing with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Governmental Organizations (IGOs), as well as other civilian outreach and involvement groups, but chaplains must never act in a vacuum. Chaplains should strive to have their commanders' full knowledge and approval prior to any collaborative effort. At the very least, chaplains must ensure they are operating within the commanders' clear intent.

e. Finally, the Hebrew Scriptures remind us: "Fear not," (Is 43:1) and, "Know that I am God!" (Ps 46:10) As men and women of God, we know that with God all things are possible - with God miracles *will* be worked through us in our ministry. If we're overly concerned about doing it "our way," or about how we'll look if we act this way or that, we might benefit from a spiritual change of focus: a focus on God and not self. If we begin to feel anxious, or begin to experience physical or mental fatigue, it is probably time to do some "spiritual retrograde." Take time for *personal prayer and reflection*. In the midst of the fog and chaos of war, this spiritual activity will re-invigorate, re-empower, and re-orientate us to things that really matter and help us fulfill the *sacred* mission at hand. Remember, we always make time to eat, or sleep, or tend to other biological needs, even in war. As spiritual leaders, we must *also* find time to pray.

And now, having shared these thoughts about how chaplains need to conduct themselves in the combat environment we've entered, we would like to take a moment more to discuss a different, but related, subject.

As chaplains, we bear a significant responsibility to help our people understand the moral basis for engaging in war, the moral limitations on the methods of war, and the moral dangers involved for participants in war. Our Nation's enemies have been very energetic in their efforts to convince the global court of public opinion that their attacks against our citizens, our cities, and our civilization were

morally justified. It is appropriate for chaplains, as moral and ethical advisors to military commanders and to the rank and file, to provide a morally valid framework for judging and refuting the enemy's claims.

Recognizing the diversity represented in our many theologies and ecclesiastical histories, we still recommend to you the insights contained in the body of thought known as Just War Theory. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), building on the foundations of Plato, Cicero, and the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, defined the ethical boundaries of a Just War. However, Augustine had a far greater goal than merely establishing parameters for a Just War; he was more concerned with war's impact on the warrior:

What is the evil in war? ...the real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power, and such like; and it is generally to punish these things, when force is required to inflict the punishment, that in obedience to God or some lawful authority, good men undertake wars... (Contra Faustus 25)

The categories and principles of Just War are important for a number of reasons': 1) they guard against unjust conflict in the world; 2) they offer moral guidance to those who must plan and fight in wars; 3) they help ensure that the goals of every Just War (i.e., the establishment of a just and lasting peace) are met; and 4) they help warriors retain their humanity through the most stressful, dehumanizing, and spiritually dangerous moments of their lives.

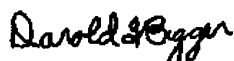
We suspect that Augustine was a military chaplain at heart. He cared deeply for those called to fight in wars, and wanted to ensure that warriors retained their humanity in the midst of the inhumane activity of combat. The same should be true for us as naval chaplains today.

And so we pray for those who must prepare and perhaps fight in the weeks, months, and years ahead, that in the dangers and trials, God blesses them and keeps them safe. We pray that God inspires their decisions and guides their efforts. And let us pray for each other that, above all else, we as men and women of peace may directly impact through our ministry the final goal of all wars: the establishment of a just and lasting peace for our country and for our world.

May God bless your ministry. May God bless our Armed Forces. And may God bless America.



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